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MAGAZINE

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TV Show aims to
Reduce Election Violence

EQUATORIAL MISSION

Embassy Libreville advances diplomacy
in Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe



Editor-in-Chief

Isaac D. Pacheco
pacheco2@state.gov

Deputy Editor

Ed Warner
warneres@state.gov

Associate Editor

Bill Palmer
palmerwr2@state.gov

Art Director

Luis A. Jimenez, Jr.
jimenezla@state.gov

Contacting Us

2401 E Street NW, Room H236
Washington DC 20522
statemagazine@state.gov
Phone: (202) 261-8163
Fax: (202) 663-1769

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Goal!!!

Sports diplomacy scores big for mission

Sport for Community participant Gabriel Mayr de Oliveira Silva shares tactics with his team. *Photo by Josef Kubiček*

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On The Cover

Pico Cão Grande (Great Dog Peak), a volcanic plug peak in the south of São Tomé in Obo National Park, rises majestically more than 1,000 feet over palm oil plantations and rainforest.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco



In the News

Embassy Ride Fights Trafficking

In July, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City partnered with the city government and the NGO Collective Against Trafficking in Persons on a bicycle rally against human trafficking. More than 70 participants from the public, government and civil society learned about human trafficking at stops along a 12-kilometer bike route through the city.

Officials are only able to identify roughly 40,000 victims of trafficking a year, so the embassy focused on teaching citizens how to recognize victims, to discourage the patronage of organizations or businesses using trafficked labor. Activities included washing a nearby car's window, to remind riders that children performing such tasks at stoplights are often trafficking victims.

"Trafficking in persons is a crime estimated to victimize approximately 27 million men, women and children," said Chargé d'Affaires Laura Dogu. She urged attendees to think about the "bigger criminal organization your few coins might be supporting each time a child tries to wash your car windows at a stop light" and to "reconsider purchasing the pirated goods that are often produced by the hands of forced labor."

Stops on the ride included congregation areas for trafficked labor and the headquarters for organizations combatting the crime. At the



Deputy Chief of Mission Laura Dogu speaks at the rally.

Photo by Melissa Martinez

U.S. Embassy stop, organizers asked teams to write something they had learned about human trafficking from previous stops.

One rider, Roland Minez, of the post's office of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), told the press, "It's not possible to stop human trafficking on a bicycle, but raising awareness is really important." He was joined at the finish line by his wife, Lisa Minez, and Consular Officer Hilleary Williams.

The Department of Justice's Office of Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training organized the embassy effort as part of its \$4 million Trafficking in Persons program in Mexico. More information about the embassy's trafficking in persons activities is on the post's website. ■

Robotics Competition Promotes Science Education

Employing the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), robotics can "capture the imagination of kids around the world, providing a platform for global partnerships and economic development," said Deputy Special Representative for Global Partnerships Thomas Debass at a July State Department event on "Robo Diplomacy." The event explored how the Department can incorporate robotics into its global public diplomacy and development efforts, and featured a presentation by Russ Fisher-Ives, director of Global Programs for RoboRAVE International.

RoboRAVE International is an annual robotics competition in Albuquerque, N.M., that seeks to make robotics accessible to youths ages 8 and up, regardless of educational or socioeconomic background. Participants build and program robots, with help from facilitators only as needed, to compete in challenges, such as extinguishing four candles in three minutes or less.

Winning is secondary to learning through collaboration, Fisher-Ives said.

The competition aims to excite students about STEM careers. According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 16 percent of American high school seniors are proficient in mathematics and interested in a STEM career. The United States ranks 25th in mathematics and 17th in science among industrialized nations.

There are regional competitions, such as RoboRAVE Latinoamerica and RoboRAVE Asia, as well as the international competition in New



Robo Diplomacy attendees play with one of the robots. They are, from left, Amy Storrow, senior advisor for innovation in ECA; Hannah Koenig, Franklin Fellow in ECA; and Heather E. Ward, information resource officer in the Bureau of International Information Programs.

Photo by Lindsey Spector

Mexico. They offer high value at minimal cost: Registration for a team costs \$100 or less, and a team's robot must cost less than \$1,500. In 2014, RoboRAVE has involved more than 1,480 youths in eight nations, including events in China, Mexico and the Czech Republic. Almost half of participants are girls.

The Secretary's Office of Global Partnerships is working with Fisher-Ives and offices throughout the Department to expand his group into additional countries and bring more participants to the organization's competitions. More information about RoboRAVE International is available online. For information on the Department's efforts in robotics, contact Partnerships@state.gov. ■

Group Honors Assistant Secretary Barr

In early July, the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship Association (PRFA) annual dinner honored Assistant Secretary for Administration Joyce Barr for her long and staunch support of the Thomas R. Pickering and Charles B. Rangel Fellowship programs. The group said Barr has supported the fellowship programs through long-term mentoring of fellows, the career advice and guidance she's given them, her willingness to speak to fellows and alumni, and her advocacy for the fellowship programs.

Launched in 2010, PRFA was established to create opportunities for alumni worldwide to connect, network, engage in professional development and community service projects and mentor the next generation of Foreign Service officers. Over the 2013-2014 program year, PRFA focused on employee retention, work-life balance and assisting Pickering and Rangel alumni as they transitioned from "fellow" status to full-fledged FSOs upon passing the entry requirements.

PRFA partnered with the Office of Recruitment, Examination and Employment (HR/REE); Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation; Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program; and other Department affinity groups to help recruit and support officers from traditionally underrepresented groups.

The Pickering Fellowship honors distinguished U.S. diplomat Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering. The Rangel International Affairs Fellowship is named for longtime New York Congressman Charles B. Rangel, who



PRFA Networking Chair Jennifer Handog, right, and Assistant Secretary Barr pose after Barr received the award for her support of Pickering and Rangel Fellows.
Photo by Johanna Villalobos

secured federal funding for the program and championed greater diversity in foreign affairs careers. Both programs are funded by the Department as cooperative agreements, overseen and implemented by HR/REE.

Fellows are selected by an independent review panel in a competitive process that tests candidates' writing skills, substantive knowledge, knowledge of the Foreign Service and interviewing skills. The selection panels are comprised of current and former FSOs, academics and administrators, and seek candidates who demonstrate the potential to succeed in the Foreign Service.

Thus far, 660 Pickering Fellows and 198 Rangel Fellows have contributed to the Department's mission. More information about PRFA and the Pickering and Rangel Fellows is on the programs' Facebook pages and the websites of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation and Rangel program. ■

HRSC Launches REA/WAE Registry

The Department has created a central registry of those in what is now known as the Reemployed Annuitant/WAE (REA/WAE) program, which fills staffing needs with annuitants. The program encompasses domestic and overseas positions, and offers the skills of annuitants from the Foreign Service and Foreign Affairs Agencies and the Department's Civil Service ranks.

The HR Service Center (HRSC) in Charleston, S.C., is the first point of contact for program inquiries and manages the registry of prospective REA/WAE participants, including their contact and skills information, enabling managers to quickly and easily find candidates for short-term vacancies. (Bureaus and offices manage recruitment and selection for vacant REA/WAE positions, since those positions are created and funded at the bureau or office level.)

Managers seeking to employ a REA/WAE can request a list of annuitants through their Bureau REA/WAE coordinator or from HRSC@state.gov or by calling 866-300-7419. Lists can be filtered by skill code, language, location and other factors. In the future, the list will include the ability to search by previous assignments and Foreign Service Institute courses.

More than 1,800 annuitants are in the program, and 1,200 of them are employed. Annuitants wishing to join the program, and employed annuitants not already in the registry, can submit their contact and skills information through their bureau's REA/WAE coordinator, HRSC@state.gov or by calling 866-300-7419. An annuitant's information will appear on the lists provided to hiring managers interested in specific skills and experience.



Anne Aguilera, a WAE employee in the Bureau of Human Resources works on a document in her office.
Photo by Ed Warner

Annuitants should also actively network with bureau contacts, lobby for positions and send their resumes to bureau coordinators and contacts. (The registry does not allow for posting of resumes due to Privacy Act concerns.)

Several informational resources are available on the Retirement Network website, including information on the REA/WAE program and program updates and changes. Frequently asked questions are also posted and updated on a regular basis on Ask HR and AskRNet. ■

Diversity Notes

JOHN M. ROBINSON
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

Expect. Employ. Empower.

Some of us are old enough to remember the slogan from the 1950s, “Hire the Handicapped: It’s Good Business.” Although that Department of Labor (DOL) slogan was used with the best of intentions in advertisements to employers, it was at times misinterpreted and mocked. Hiring persons with disabilities (PWDs) was perceived by some to be a noble act of charity, rather than simply the right thing to do to increase workforce diversity. While we’ve made progress through the years as cultural shifts and increased awareness have helped change prejudicial attitudes, there still remains much work to be done to increase meaningful employment opportunities for PWDs.

In October of each year, we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). NDEAM aims to educate and raise awareness about disability employment issues and recognize the many contributions made by individuals with disabilities. As we celebrate 2014 NDEAM, let us reflect upon this year’s theme: “Expect. Employ. Empower.”

Despite advancements, the biggest barriers to employing PWDs often are preconceived notions and misconceptions held by well intentioned but uninformed individuals. For example, many individuals mistakenly believe that employees or applicants with disabilities are held to a lower standard than their colleagues. However, PWDs must meet the skill, experience, education and other requirements of any position that they hold or seek. Overcoming such stereotypes and ill-informed beliefs will enable us to move toward increased representation of PWDs in our workforce.

The Department and federal government continue to take steps to ensure our workforce is diverse and inclusive of PWDs. There are many resources and authorities to help:

- Schedule A hiring authority provides for noncompetitive hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities without posting the position on USAJOBS or otherwise advertising the vacancy. Consequently, Schedule A hiring authority provides a significantly faster mechanism to fill an open position. Supervisors should contact the Selective Placement Coordinator in the Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Division (DRAD) for additional information.

- There are also noncompetitive hiring authorities that can be used to hire eligible veterans. The Department’s Veterans Employment Program Manager in the Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management (CSHRM) works with qualified veterans, including those with disabilities, to find meaningful employment within the Department and helps them transition into their position.



- The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) is a recruitment and referral program connecting federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who wish to be interns or full time employees. Offices interested in hiring an intern through WRP should contact DRAD for additional information and may review candidates online at www.WRP.gov.

It’s not enough just to hire PWDs as the DOL slogan suggested. It is equally important to ensure inclusion and retention through equal opportunities for career advancement. Managers should provide PWDs, when hired, with the resources, tools and support to succeed. One such resource available is the Disability Action Group (DAG), an employee affinity group which serves as a forum for information exchange and provides professional development and networking opportunities. For more information, contact DAG at DAGCouncil@state.gov.

Overcoming stereotypes and ill-informed beliefs about PWDs will enable us to increase the representation of PWDs in our workforce, thereby increasing diversity. Expect, employ and empower are three words that place an important focus on the hiring, promotion and retention of PWDs. As we continue to diversify our workforce, let us use this year’s NDEAM theme as a guiding light to strengthen our commitment to true diversity. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Winning Combo

The right mix of content is key to social media success in Mexico

By Dave Moyer, assistant information officer, and Daniel Rocha, ESTH specialist, U.S. Embassy in Mexico City



Members of the embassy public affairs and ESTH teams hit the social media lab for some experimentation.

Photo by State Department

Successfully engaging an audience on social media requires diplomatic posts to balance policy and entertaining messages, such as posts about U.S. culture and history. At the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, we use lighter postings about sports and culture as a sort of “candy” to attract new followers to whom we then feed healthy portions of “vegetables,” or policy messages.

Mexico City’s Facebook page is one of the most popular embassy pages in the world and growing fast: In 2013, our Facebook “likes” increased from 100,000 to well over 500,000. On Twitter, we began 2013 with 11,551 followers and currently have more than 30,000. Our feed is ranked sixth in the region and growing steadily, with about 1,800 new followers per month. We also post to our YouTube channel and Flickr site several times per month.

In 2013, the environment, science, technology and health (ESTH) section submitted 140 Facebook posts, making it the strongest contributor to Embassy Mexico’s social media feeds over the last year. These posts generated 19,349 likes, 3,747 shares

and 764 comments. Working with the public affairs section (PAS), ESTH identified the following keys to success:

Posts with compelling photos draw increased attention and engagement from Facebook and Twitter audiences.

Posts congratulating Mexican scientists and entrepreneurs for their success are consistently popular.

Directly tagging an individual or organization related to a post can extend its reach.

The best time to publish and engage the audience is between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. and on weekends, when people spend more time on social media.

With an average of nearly a dozen posts per day, we don’t want to overwhelm our followers with text, so we always include an image to help people decide which postings might be of interest. Often, the photos were taken at an official event where an embassy representative participated or spoke. Ideally, we try to include an action shot or a candid photo. When photos are unavailable, we include a logo, stock photo or icon associated with the topic.

For ESTH, the most liked post of the year (962 likes) was a congratulatory message to Mexican photographer Octavio Aburto for winning an international photo contest called “Our World Underwater.” Aburto’s astounding fish photo was the message. This posting reflects another of our best practices: Show images of Mexicans winning praise outside of Mexico. It is especially rewarding when one’s efforts are noticed by an international organization. In November 2013, we tweeted a picture of Mexican scientist Mario Molina, who was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama during a ceremony at the White House. With 38 retweets we reached nearly 3 million people.

Similarly, ESTH posted congratulations to young social entrepreneur Mariana Gonzalez for being the first Mexican to participate in the Fortune/State Global Women’s Mentoring program. It was ESTH’s most popular Facebook posting on the topic of entrepreneurship, receiving 410 likes, 71 shares and 31 comments.

One reason the posting was so successful was because ESTH tagged Gonzalez, making it easier for her and others to share the information. The posting created a chain reaction of others offering congratulations. Gonzalez and her company Ilumexico shared the story, as did the newspaper *Diario de Morelos*, the Autonomous University of Mexico’s engineering department and business incubator, and several consulates.

Tagging is not a new concept, but it is often done haphazardly. In Mexico, we tag individuals whom we think would be interested in our posting. In March, ESTH drafted an op-ed piece for the ambassador for World Wildlife Day. One of Mexico’s leading daily newspapers, *Milenio*, published the op-ed.

But what about those who don’t read the newspaper? PAS and ESTH compiled a list of 25 leading environmental scientists and researchers who are active on Twitter. We posted tweets that linked to the article and tagged these 25 Twitter leaders to make sure they saw the article and had the chance to share it with their networks. PAS Mexico City now shares all op-eds and press releases via social as well as print media.

The embassy’s best practices on social media were learned over time and through many experiments. Sometimes the best solution is just to try something and see what happens. Carefully tracking the metrics behind postings is essential to tuning social media strategy and avoiding posts that do not resonate with the audience. ■



President Barack Obama awards the 2013 Presidential Medal of Freedom to Mario Molina at the White House in November 2013.

White House photo by Lawrence Jackson



Office of the Month



The CSHRM team poses for an office portrait.
Photo by Josué M. Barrera

HR Strategists

CSHRM seeks diverse, agile Civil Service

By Josué M. Barrera, executive diversity outreach manager, Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management

The Office of Civil Service Human Resource Management (HR/CSHRM) provides services, advice and assistance to the Department's 11,000 domestic Civil Service employees in Washington, D.C., and field offices throughout the country.

CSHRM is also the Department's liaison with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and other federal agencies on issues affecting the Department's Civil Service workforce.

Additionally, the office assists supervisors looking for information on filling a vacancy, office managers wanting to improve team effectiveness, HR specialists needing clarification on policies or understanding of hiring authorities and employees looking to advance their Civil Service careers.

More broadly, CSHRM provides HR solutions and promotes excellence in strategic human capital management. CSHRM Director Ray Limon said everyone in CSHRM should "be a subject matter expert and possess a high degree of strategic thinking." That's because CSHRM supports other HR units of the Department "by resolving policy issues, eliminating confusion and providing guidance where needed," he explained.

Of CSHRM's three divisions, the Accountability Division (CSHRM/A), led

by CSHRM Deputy Director Kim Bruner, is responsible for Civil Service HR policy development, compliance and accountability, and the evaluation of HR programs. She said she's encouraged by the growing capacity of HR colleagues throughout the Department, adding, "We are committed to improving the Department's HR operations by helping partners deliver the highest quality HR service possible."

CSHRM/A employee Kristin Fulcher said her work involves sharing with HR offices the best practices identified during accountability reviews. Whether because of its own reviews or those of OPM or the Office of Inspector General, CSHRM/A updates or formulates Civil Service policies and guidance, prevents prohibited personnel practices and promotes federal Merit Systems principles. It also monitors and evaluates HR programs and activities through annual Human Capital Accountability Reviews and evaluations of Department-level HR programs.

CSHRM collaborates with stakeholders on the institutionalization of HRStat, a data-driven pilot program that examines HR management data and trends. Recent HRStat

reviews covered the Department's Senior Executive Service, recruitment, customer service and work/life programs.

CSHRM's Career Development and Training Division (CSHRM/CD), led by Elizabeth Assink, develops policy for programs that facilitate career development, training and mobility for the Civil Service. She said the division fosters "career growth and upward mobility by encouraging and helping employees to reflect on their career and create the environment that encourages educational and development opportunities to help them reach their next level."



Staffers Hak Singh, Patti Wai and Karen Kingsbury hold a hallway meeting.
Photo by Ed Warner

CSHRM/CD helps identify the competencies and skills needed for the Department's mission-critical occupations, and is developing the "career roadmaps" for employees to develop the skills needed for such occupations. CSHRM/CD also manages the Department-USAID Civil Service Mentoring Program, now in its 11th year. The program includes informal situational mentoring, providing employees with access to Department leaders worldwide.

CSHRM/CD facilitates short- and long-term external developmental opportunities, such as the Congressional Fellows Programs and opportunities at the Council on Foreign Relations, and manages the FLEX Connect program, where employees can find or post developmental detail opportunities. FLEX Connect recently received the 2014 Basics Award for Ingenuity and Results from the Partnership for Public Service and has been recognized by OPM for innovative staffing. Managers are working to build a similar federal-wide program, called GovConnect.

FLEX Connect was created by a group of 2013 Excellence in Government Fellows, including State Department employees Alyce Abdalla, Amy Christianson and Blakeney Vasquez.

FLEX Connect Program Manager Shantae Elliott-Lucas said her work lets her have an impact by providing leadership and developmental guidance on CSHRM programs.

CSHRM also runs the Career Development Resource Center, which has provided career services for more than 20 years. Senior career counselors provide individual, confidential counseling and recurring sessions on topics such as "Creating and Editing Your Resume."

Another CSHRM unit, the Executive Resources and Performance Management Division (ERPM), administers the Department's Senior Executive Service merit staffing process, including the competitive two-year SES Candidate Development Program, and evaluates the performance of Civil Service leaders and their organizations. Patti Wai and the CSHRM/ERPM team are also responsible for developing and implementing Department-level policies and procedures related to Schedule C (political) appointments.



HR Specialist Ariana O'Sullivan, right, chats with HR Specialist April Torikai-Bookstaber in the latter's office.
Photo by Ed Warner

The Department uses the government-wide SES performance appraisal system, and is working to incorporate the Department's leadership principles into the Civil Service performance management system. In January, CSHRM announced changes to the SES merit staffing process aimed at improving diversity of the SES applicant pool. These include mandatory outreach plans, ensuring diversity of the qualifications review panel and increased involvement of the Executive Resources Board, which is responsible for the overall SES merit staffing process.

CSHRM also includes the Veterans Employment Program Manager (VEPM), who provides employment outreach to disabled veterans, retired and active-duty service members, and spouses. The VEPM presents quarterly training to hiring managers and HR professionals on the special hiring authorities tailored to increase the hiring and retention of veterans. The Department has increased its veterans hiring from 13.3 percent in fiscal 2010 to 27.4 percent of all Civil Service hires in fiscal 2013.

The Department's first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) called for the Department to work smarter and reform personnel practices, to develop an agile workforce for changing conditions. The second QDDR will likely call on CSHRM to help the Department adapt to the demands of a changing workforce. As the Department's strategic HR partner, CSHRM will continue to support the Department's efforts to attract, develop, promote and retain a talented, diverse and motivated workforce.

The office is a place where its own workforce

feels suitably challenged. Yvette Uhalde, a CSHRM human resources specialist, said, "I love that CSHRM's goals not only touch HR staff and State employees, but even reach potential applicants. CSHRM's goals help ensure as fair, equitable and effective a recruitment and staffing system as possible." ■



Ray Limon is CSHRM director.
State Department photo

Goal!!!

Sports diplomacy scores big for mission

By Matt Ferner, Presidential Management Fellow, SportsUnited division,
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs



Ambassador Ayalde, center rear in striped shirt, stands with the U.S. Men's National Team (USMNT) and the Estrelas de Futebol during the USMNT training camp in Sao Paulo.

Photo by Fernanda Salatini

Byond the competition's drama, the 2014 World Cup offered a great opportunity for Mission Brazil to unite and intensify its sports diplomacy efforts under the mission "Sports for All" initiative, which will guide mission sports diplomacy programming through the 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics in Brazil, and supports mission goals of promoting education, social inclusion, youth empowerment and exchanges, and English language learning.

Even before Ambassador Liliana Ayalde launched "Sports for All" alongside the U.S. Men's National Soccer Team during its January training camp in Sao Paulo, mission programming was underway, made possible with significant support from the SportsUnited division. The ongoing Estrelas (Shooting Stars) program, developed with key Brazilian partners, includes a project targeting female soccer players and one bringing together boys and girls around basketball. Over the past two years, the program has provided training in English, sports and leadership skills to nearly 100 underprivileged girls and boys from the poorest areas of Sao Paulo.

One was Ana Paula Silva Santos, now a shining example of an Estrela de Futebol (Soccer Star). Despite growing up kicking a soccer ball around her neighborhood, Ana Paula was an outsider in what is largely a man's sport in Brazil. She played on the street with boys, but they were often rough and disrespectful, she said.

Then she found the Estrelas program, which she said "saved many of our lives, because we didn't have anything to do before. Now, we do what we love, which is play soccer and speak English."

Through Estrelas, she played for the first time on an all-girls team, which was "like being part of a family." This sense of belonging leads to greater confidence and empowerment off the field. Research by the Women's Sports Foundation confirms the positive impact of sports on girls and women, and found that girls participating in sports more often excel in school and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

Mission Brazil is exploring expanding the Estrelas model nationally to reach many more marginalized youth.

In another example of female-focused "Sports for All" programming, the mission has since May 2013 hosted female sports envoys, including World Cup winners and Olympic gold medalists Brandi Chastain, Julie Foudy and Tiffany Roberts Sahaydak, as well as collegiate star Erica Woda. It also sent a group of young female Brazilian soccer players to the United States for a sports exchange and conducted a soccer tournament dubbed "Copinha do Mundo" (Mini World Cup).

These programs provided many girls with their first experiences of being coached by women or participating in organized, all-girls sporting events. In particular instances, female participation in soccer has skyrocketed as a result of the programs.

Boys, too, have benefited from mission programs. Cobi Jones, an American soccer icon, taught leadership and teamwork to youths from areas of the country that do not often receive mission programming. Capturing the essence of the "Sports for All" message, a Brazilian coach said one of Cobi's clinics "filled my players with inspiration and confidence, because for the first time we

Estrelas de Futebol participant Ana Paula Silva Santos competes at the University of Tennessee during a SportsUnited Visitor program.
Photo by Elisa Platillero

attended an event without being discriminated against for not having a uniform or being from a violent area of the city.”

To ensure that mega-events like the World Cup have a trickle-down benefit within Brazil, the State Department is piloting a program called “Sport for Community: Emerging Leaders in Action.”

That uses the energy generated by mega-sporting events to empower local leaders in sport-based youth development organizations. One such leader, Gabriel Mayr de Oliveira Silva, founded Urece Sports and Culture for the Blind in Rio de Janeiro, a leading organization behind the success of the visually impaired Brazilian national soccer team, which has won three straight Paralympic gold medals. “Sport for Community” will match Gabriel with a mentor from a U.S.-based organization for a month-long mentorship in the United States that aims to help him gain the skills and networks to increase Urece’s success. Fourteen other emerging leaders from Brazil will also be matched with a mentor through the program.

Through “Sports for All,” the Department and Mission Brazil are demonstrating the power of sports in promoting mutual understanding and social inclusion. As Secretary of State John Kerry put it: “Sports are ‘a way to communicate with people ... [They] break down the barriers, prove commonality, take away any of the sense of ‘We’re different’ or ‘You’re different’ and make people the same with the same common passions. It’s a very strong language.” ■



No Accident

Exercise boosts Baghdad's readiness

By Suzanne K. Whang, editor, Bureau of Diplomatic Security
Photos by Jamie Berlowitz

When one employee of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad got out of bed on April 19, he did not put on a suit; he dressed in old clothes, knowing he would get roughed up in a car accident that day. He was one of the employees who had volunteered to be role players in an enactment of a traffic accident for a large-scale crisis management exercise (CME).

This two-hour exercise was designed to prepare Embassy Baghdad personnel and their Iraqi counterparts to handle crises. "The more serious the situation, the harder we depend on pre-established working relationships," said Deputy Regional Security Officer for Protective Operations Paul Kennedy. "We saw how this training had benefited not only the Iraqis, but the embassy in coordinating our own response."

In preparation for the CME, Embassy Baghdad's Security Protective Specialist Dave Shearman, the lead designer and exercise director, had a construction tractor smash five defunct embassy vehicles which had previously been marked for destruction. He then had the cars moved into tight positions to make it more challenging for the first-responders to extract the injured.

On the morning of the exercise, 13 volunteers reported to the embassy's annex, where they were made up to appear injured. Then, Shearman directed everybody to their places, where they were to play passengers in a diplomatic motorcade. With Iraqi and American VIPs observing from a covered viewing area, controlled chaos ensued. Smoke filled the air. People ran hither and thither. Walkie-talkies beeped and buzzed. Moans and groans emanated from the injured.

Other role players immediately contacted the embassy command center and secured the perimeter against possible attackers. They also stepped in to provide triage care, assessing who needed immediate treatment, when they realized the medic in the embassy motorcade was among the injured. Moments into the exercise, the embassy's Tactical Operations Center processed

the distress call and, after receiving clearance from the government of Iraq, coordinated the dispatch of emergency response teams and assets to the scene of the accident.

As soon as they arrived, the emergency responders saw that they were outnumbered by the seriously injured. This was by design, to make the exercise more challenging. With the clock ticking, responders tried several methods to extract the eight injured people trapped in the twisted Chevrolet Suburbans. They decided to use the "Jaws of Life" tool to pry open the vehicles. Then they performed triage on the victims, while the CME's sole interpreter translated shouts and orders into Arabic and English.

Fifteen minutes into the exercise, helicopters and ambulances arrived to transport the injured Iraqis to a local hospital and fly embassy personnel to the emergency room of the Diplomatic Support Hospital in Baghdad.

Shearman had asked the doctors to design mock injuries that would stretch their medical capabilities. Thus, incoming role players arrived with broken bones, burns, hemorrhages and head and spine injuries.

One mock medical procedure included use of a robot that provided live video to

specialty surgeons at a U.S. university hospital. Thousands of miles away, these specialists could observe the operation and advise the on-site surgeons.

When the exercise was over and all the equipment had been put away, the analysis began. Shearman put together an after-action report that assessed 220 embassy participants from nearly all entities of the mission, including the ambassador's office, Regional Security Office, Health Unit, Technical Operations Center, Diplomatic Support Hospital and Embassy Air Iraq. Embassy personnel involved in the exercise and analysis engaged in dialogue and information sharing with multiple Iraqi agencies.

The CME's lessons translate seamlessly to other emergencies in high-threat environments. Differences in emergency response protocol, language barriers and legal restrictions affect almost all crises. "When I was in Basrah in 2012, a driver of a semi-trailer—who was texting at the time—rammed into the motorcade I was commanding," said Shearman. "That accident brought up a lot of questions we simply didn't have answers to, such as what emergency response capabilities did the host nation possess? How willing and able were they to respond to our emergencies? Are there areas within the embassy we could improve?"

"This joint exercise," he continued, "yielded a lot of critical information that will prevent us from going into an emergency situation blind. But the main value was the opportunity to build relationships among the embassy and Iraqi law enforcement, emergency responders and government security counterparts that will help us jointly handle other crisis events." ■



A helicopter arrives at the scene of the accident to medevac the injured to the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Hospital.



Iraqi and Embassy Baghdad emergency responders rush the role players to the hospital.

SAFER WORLD

Bureaus help secure Libyan chemical weapons

By Eric Lund, public diplomacy officer, and Leah Matchett, intern,
Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation

In the deserts of Libya, as Muammar al-Qadhafi's regime crumbled, a new threat emerged: The disintegration of Qadhafi's government brought to light a new store of undeclared chemical and conventional weapons that had been long hidden or forgotten. How Libya and the United States reacted to the discoveries shows how weapons proliferation can be stopped when a committed partner and the international community work together toward a common goal.

In 2009, President Obama warned an audience in Prague of non-state actors acquiring the materials to create weapons of mass destruction and urged all nations to secure dangerous materials and reduce weapons stocks. Secretary of State John Kerry echoed the President's message when, in Senate testimony in 2013, he noted that gas warfare during World War I caused most of the world to ban chemical weapons.

Before the start of Libya's revolution in 2011, roughly half of the country's key chemical agents in its declared stock of bulk chemical weapons had been destroyed in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. A mechanical failure kept the rest from being destroyed, and after the revolution broke out, destruction ground to a halt. After the Qadhafi regime fell, Tripoli's new government told the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) it had found a stockpile of previously undeclared chemical weapons.

Typically, the OPCW responds to such reports by sending inspectors to verify the munitions' destruction, but Libya's volatile post-civil war environment made it unsafe for OPCW inspectors to do their work.

At the State Department, the bureaus of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance (AVC), International Security

and Nonproliferation (ISN), and Political Military Affairs (PM) worked with the Libyan government and the OPCW to secure and destroy the munitions to prevent them from falling into terrorists' hands. The first step was for the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli to negotiate an agreement with the Libyan government by which the Libyan National Authority, the government's official liaison to the OPCW, would provide support in the field to keep the weapons site secure and also provide transportation to it.

To help augment security of the site, ISN contracted with a U.S.-based company called Advantor Systems Corporation, which assessed the security needs of the site and made recommendations to the Libyan National Authority. With Libya's approval, Advantor hardened the weapons storage bunkers and installed security equipment, actions that later earned it the Department's 2013 Small Business Contractor award.

At the storage site, Advantor found a significant number of conventional arms and unexploded ordnance. The PM bureau assisted with the site clean-up as part of its country wide, multilateral response to the threat from Libya's unsecured stockpiles of conventional weapons. Eventually, PM removed more than 1,000 abandoned conventional weapons from that location.

With the site finally secure, thanks to ISN's contract with Advantor and PM's removal of the conventional weapons and unexploded ordinance, the OPCW was finally able to deploy its inspectors to verify the destruction of the chemical weapons.

This wasn't just a State Department affair. The Department of Defense's Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) helped the Libyans destroy the chemical munitions under its Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. DTRA provided destruction technology,



PM's Quick Reaction Force supervises a team clearing a battle area.

Department of State photo

expertise and training to Libyan operators. The shifting political environment and uncertain security in Libya made the destruction efforts more challenging, but the munitions were all destroyed by May.

Some work still remains, since all precursor chemicals for the weapons-making process have not been destroyed, but these chemicals do not pose the same proliferation risk as did the bulk chemical agent or chemical weapons themselves.

The Libyan example demonstrates how interagency and multilateral cooperation and hard work can significantly improve international security. Through timely action, U.S. interagency coordination and international cooperation, the Libya chemical weapons elimination effort became a nonproliferation success story. Complex issues and dangerous environments inherently make nonproliferation and disarmament difficult to achieve, yet they remain some of the most worthwhile pursuits of diplomacy. As President Obama reminded the world in Prague, sometimes "we must ignore the voices that tell us the world cannot change." ■



Advantor representatives receive the Department's 2013 Small Business Award from Under Secretary of State for Management Pat Kennedy, far right.

Photo by Eric Lund

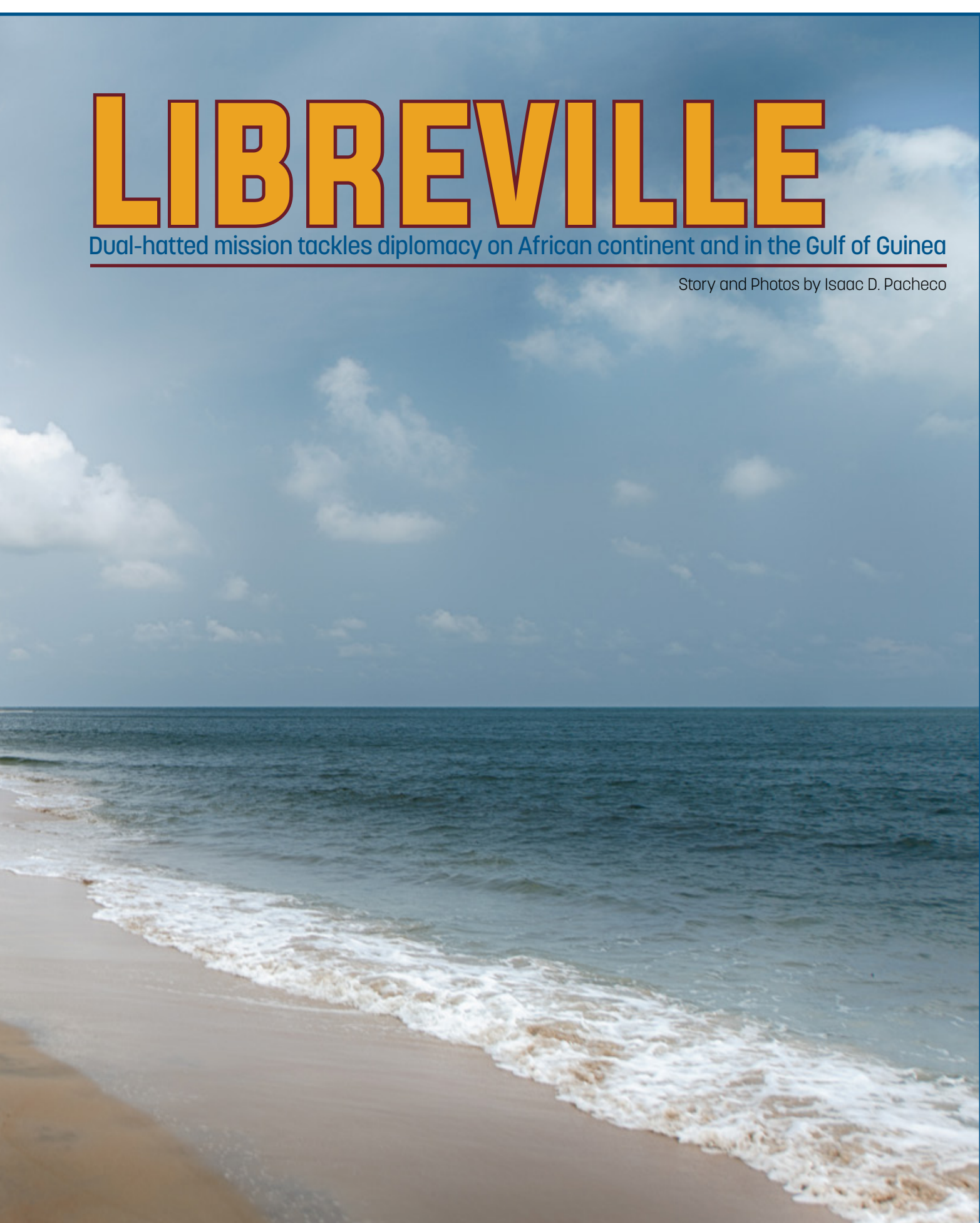


The idyllic waterfront of La Baie des Tortues Luth resort is a popular day-trip destination from Libreville, especially among those seeking to view leatherback turtles laying their eggs on nearby beaches at night.

LIBREVILLE

Dual-hatted mission tackles diplomacy on African continent and in the Gulf of Guinea

Story and Photos by Isaac D. Pacheco





Libreville, the capital and largest city in Gabon, is situated approximately 30 miles north of the equator on the west coast of Central Africa. The city is a trade center for the small African nation and home to slightly more than a third of the nation's 1.5 million residents. Located at the mouth of the Komo River, near the confluence of the Gabon Estuary and Gulf of Guinea, the city serves as a strategic port and transit point for the country's timber industry and other exporters.

"Gabon has all the potential benefits that you would want as you head into this century. It has hydrocarbon resources; abundant, fertile land; abundant water; minerals—manganese, iron ore and the like—and it doesn't, like most African countries, have significant population pressure," said Dante Paradiso, former chargé d'affaires of U.S. Embassy Libreville. "Gabon only has a million and a half people, and as a result it has the potential to develop rapidly and successfully become the hub that it aspires to be."

Despite its small size and location in a traditionally turbulent region of Africa, Libreville is one of the most expensive cities in the world, due largely to the petroleum revenue that flows through it. The oil-dominated economy has given Gabon's residents a per capita income several times higher than most other nations in sub-Saharan Africa, but income disparity remains high due to financial management issues.

"Reform is an open process and you have to take the long view," said Paradiso. "You're looking at a country that had 40-plus years of one president. Now, his son, who was elected, is a very, very different person and has actively demonstrated intent to reform."

While Libreville has its interesting highlights, Gabon's most impressive offerings are found in the surrounding mangroves and rainforest in nearby national parks. These protected areas are home to a rich assortment of fauna, including the largest remaining herds of forest elephants as well as hippos, mandrill and hundreds of bird species. The mangroves of Pongara National Park are an important breadbasket for the fish population in the estuary.

The country's extensive national parks system and bounty of wildlife make it an ideal

candidate for eco-tourism, and the country is working to put the necessary supporting infrastructure in place. Despite these hurdles, Gabon is an important partner for the United States, and the embassy's primary objectives include promoting regional security related to Gulf of Guinea maritime security, strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law, increasing economic trade and investment, and protecting the environment.

"Gabon is a country with a history of stability in Central Africa, which is known to be a very rough neighborhood," said Paradiso. "It is also host to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECAS or CEEAC by its French acronym). It has the clear potential over time to become a regional hub for trade and security."

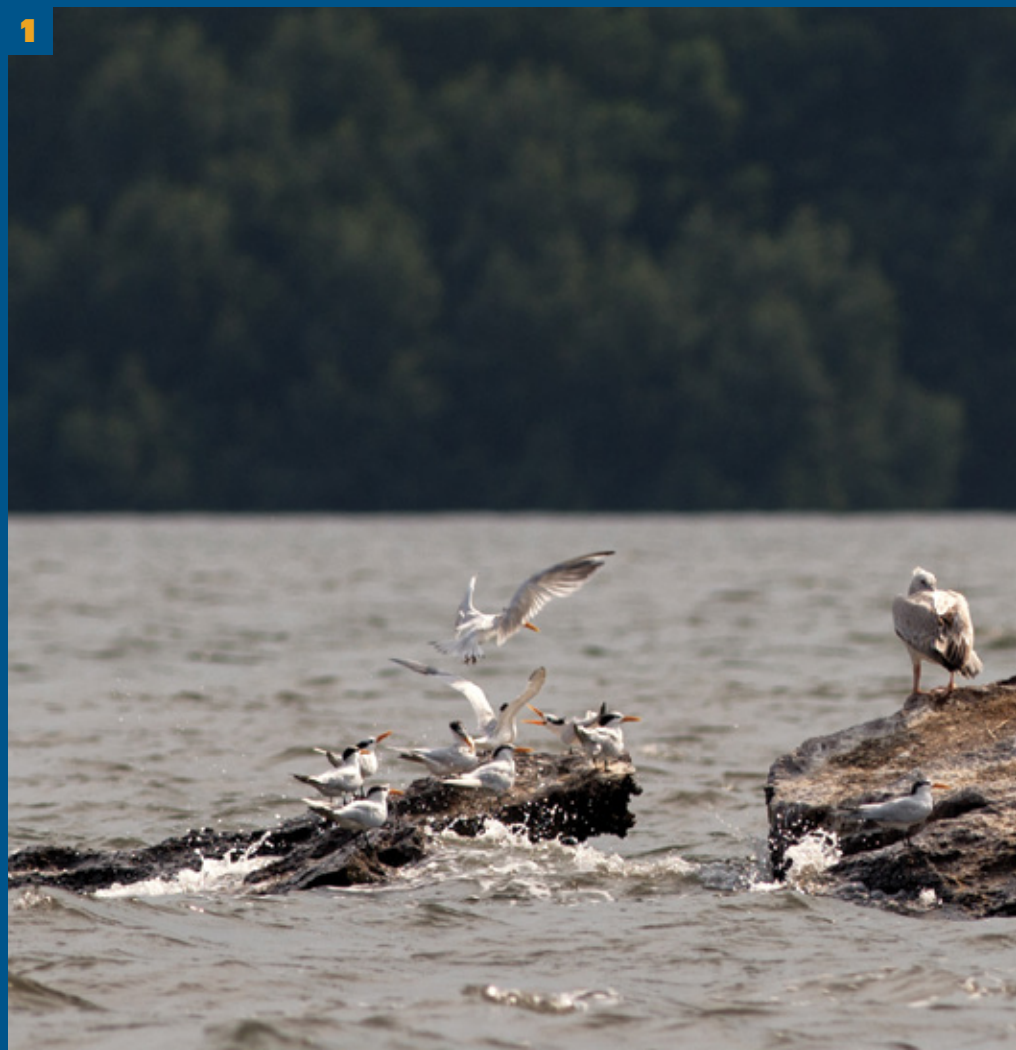
While challenging, an assignment in Libreville has its advantages, including a top-tier international school for officers' school-age children and some of the nicest housing in the region. Due to the small size of the embassy, even entry-level Foreign Service officers tackle high-

visibility projects and have opportunities to work on assignments outside their career cones.

It's "a great opportunity for upcoming or fast-rising officers because you get significant responsibility right off the bat," said Paradiso. "Across the board, you'll have the responsibility, you'll be expected to perform at a high level, the career path is great, and the issues are really interesting. One of the neat things about this career is that there is a lot of space to define the things you're interested in, that you care passionately about, and you can do that in Libreville and in the AF Bureau, more importantly," he added.

Moreover, following the successful African Leaders' Summit in August 2014, Gabon wants to increase its engagement with the United States in all fields of activity. Gabon will host the 2015 Ministerial Forum of the African Growth and Opportunity Act and has signaled its interest in concluding a Bilateral Investment Treaty, joining the Open Government Partnership, and increasing high level exchanges.

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1. The Gabon Estuary is an important stopping point for migrating birds, and home to a number of year-round residents like pelicans and other seabirds.

2. A heavy mist settles over the rainforest canopy after a downpour in Akanda National Park.

3. An aerial view looking east shows Libreville hugging the shoreline of the Gabon Estuary.

4. A group of girls walk home from a local market in downtown Libreville during a summer rain shower.





Post of the Month *Libreville / São Tomé*

One of the highlights of serving in Libreville is visiting the embassy's idyllic constituent post in São Tomé and Príncipe. Embassy Libreville provides consular services and diplomatic representation to the Lusophone island nation, located off the coast of French-speaking Gabon in the Gulf of Guinea's warm equatorial waters.

From afar, São Tomé (the larger of the two main islands that comprise the country) appears at first to be an apparition looming out of an endless azure expanse. As the mist-shrouded emerald shore comes into focus, the sounds of forest life and the earthy scents of rain-soaked vegetation beckon the weary traveler. Portuguese explorers who discovered the uninhabited island and its smaller northern neighbor, Príncipe, in the 1470s may have believed that they had found paradise upon viewing its lush rainforests, savannah-like coastal plains and sparkling blue lagoons.

For such a small island, São Tomé has an impressive array of microclimates. While the rainforest-covered interior and lush southeastern mangroves are typical of the equatorial biome, the north coastal region is more arid, with subtropical grasslands due to the rain shadow effect of the perpetually overcast highlands.

From pumice-strewn beaches, where lowland rainforest creeps down hillsides into the ocean, to savanna-like plains dotted with baobab and coconut palms, to beryl lagoons that glisten in the tropical sun, São Tomé's north coast is a breathtaking respite from

the hustle and bustle of life off island and a reminder that nature can still inspire with its beauty.

The only permanent State Department presence in this picturesque locale is an office at the Voice of America broadcasting station manned by three Locally Employed Staff members. However, Embassy Libreville personnel regularly visit for official functions. Nelson Antonio Abreu de Assuncao, who works as the economic, commercial and public diplomacy assistant on the island, said his multifaceted job is rewarding because it allows him to collaborate on projects that directly benefit people in his community.

1. A young man checks text messages on his phone on the stoop of the chapel in Agostinho Neto plantation.

2. Boys play outside a former plantation building that is still used for drying cocoa.

3. Women selling jackfruit at a market along the island's main highway enjoy several slices for themselves while exchanging gossip on a typically idyllic evening.

4. Boca de Inferno ("Mouth of Hell") is an opening in the volcanic rock along the shoreline of eastern São Tomé. Water is channelled through a blowhole in the formation during high tide creating a geyser effect.

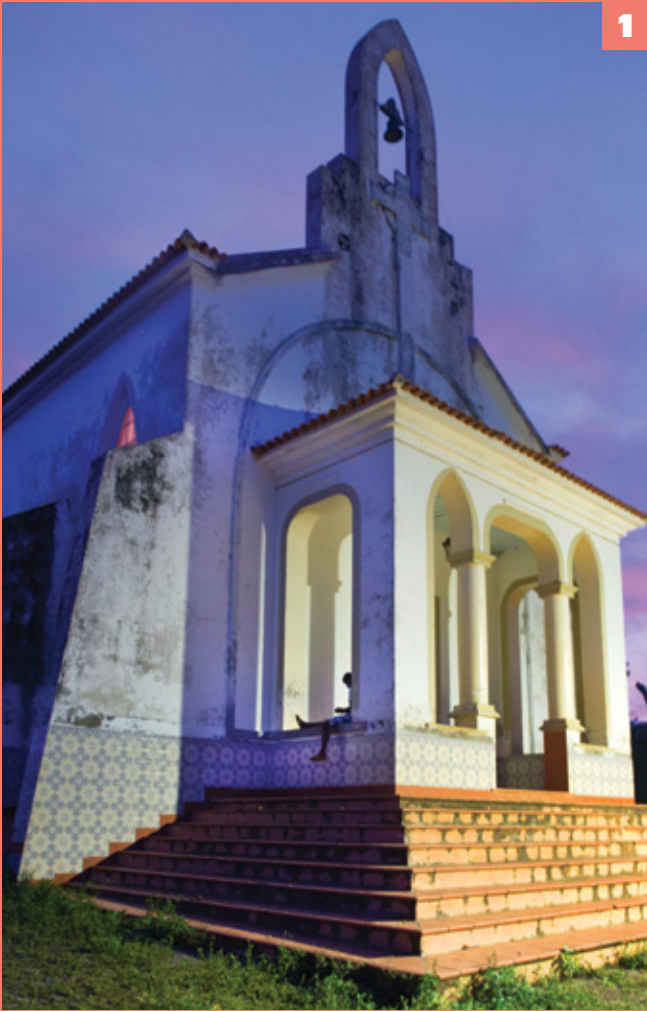
5. Due to the island's small size and limited number of large roads, motorcycles are a popular form of transportation.

6. A woman watches out for traffic as she crosses the island's main highway with her groceries.

7. A dugout canoe made from Kapok rests on the rocky beach at Lagoa Azul.

8. Women in Angolares carry baskets full of fish to market atop their heads.





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A girl walks down the main avenue of Agostinho Neto, a former plantation that is now a thriving community.

“We have the self-help program where we provide small funds to people in small locations that can benefit the communities,” he said. “We do it with the involvement of the community ... The embassy finances one part and the community has to participate by working on the other part.”

Historically, the islands’ tropical climates and abundance of fertile volcanic soil, as well as their proximity to mainland Africa, made them attractive for agriculture and trade for Portuguese colonizers. However, few Portuguese citizens wanted to relocate to an isolated archipelago in the Gulf of Guinea to grow sugar, so the Portuguese imported slaves from mainland Africa (primarily from modern-day Angola) for the back-breaking work on their sugar roças (plantations).

As sugar exports from other Portuguese colonies such as Brazil became cheaper, cultivation declined in São Tomé and sugar was replaced by cacao. The island soon emerged as the world’s preeminent supplier of cocoa.

Portugal abolished slavery in 1876, but the island’s former slave population continued to toil under oppressive conditions until the 1950s when general unrest culminated in riots and eventually a movement for liberation. São Tomé and Príncipe achieved independence in 1975, and today the country boasts a stable, representative democracy.

After independence, many plantations were abandoned by their European owners and have fallen into disrepair or been reclaimed by the jungle. However, a number of small communities still exist in and around these defunct production centers. Though no longer the global production leader, the island nation still relies heavily on cocoa as its primary export.

“It’s a unique culture, so it’s a great opportunity for cultural engagement,” said Paradiso. “If someone were ever able to figure out a somewhat cost-effective way to get folks to São Tomé, there would be a booming tourist industry. But the islands are very remote and relatively unknown, so part of our goal is to tell the story of São Tomé a little bit more broadly.”

São Tomé (Portuguese for “Saint Thomas”) is the capital and largest city in São Tomé and Príncipe, and home to the island nation’s primary airport and seaport. The picturesque city overlooks Ana Chaves Bay and features a number of Portuguese colonial buildings. As home to nearly a third of São Tomé and Príncipe’s residents, the capital is the country’s cultural epicenter, and frequently hosts national festivals and celebrations. Despite its comparatively urban setting, life still seems to move at the same leisurely pace as elsewhere on the island.

Embassy Libreville’s former public affairs officer, Kevin Krapf, helped spearhead an ongoing Arts Envoy program in São Tomé that relies on cultural exchange and community interaction to refurbish classrooms in the country’s only public university and revitalize a central square and community meeting place in one of the island’s fishing villages. According to Krapf, this socially engaged art program integrates local artistic styles and materials into projects

that have “a profound meaning for [São Toméans] and is tied into their ingenuity, their history and their traditions.”

In a region of the world where the challenges sometimes seem to outnumber the solutions, Embassy Libreville stands out as a post on the leading edge of positive change. Whether engaging on shared interests with the Gabonese on the mainland or seeking respite on the quiet shores of São Tomé, the embassy officers have one of the more unusual postings in the Foreign Service and myriad opportunities to tackle substantive issues that have regional and international relevance. ■



Gabon

Capital: Libreville

Government type: Republic; multiparty presidential regime

Area: 267,667 sq km.

Comparative area: Slightly smaller than Colorado

Population: 1,672,597

Languages: French (official), Fang, Myene, Nzebi, Bapounou/Eschira, Bandjabi

Religions: Christian 55%-75%, animist, Muslim less than 1%

GDP per capita: \$19,200

Export partners: Japan, US, Australia, India, China, Spain

Export commodities: Crude oil, timber, manganese, uranium

Import partners: France, China, US, Belgium, Cameroon

Import commodities: machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, construction materials

Currency: Central African CFA franc

Internet country code: .ga

At a Glance

São Tomé and Príncipe

Capital: São Tomé

Government type: Republic

Area: 964 sq km.

Comparative area: More than five times the size of Washington, DC

Population: 190,428

Languages: Portuguese 98% (official), Forro 36%, Cabo Verdian 8%, French 7%, Angolar 7%, English 5%, Lungue 1%, other (including sign language) 2%

Religions: Catholic 56%, Adventist 4%, Assembly of God 3%, New Apostolic 3%, Mana 2%, Universal Kingdom of God 2%, Jehovah's Witness 1%, other 6%, none 21%, unspecified 1%

GDP per capita: \$2,200

Export partners: Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Nigeria, US

Export commodities: Cocoa 80%, copra, coffee, palm oil

Import partners: Portugal and Gabon

Import commodities: machinery and electrical equipment, food products, petroleum products

Currency: Dobras

Internet country code: .st

At a Glance



São Tomé residents strike up a friendly conversation in front of a colorful building in the city center.



Sweden Bike Tour

Chief of Mission Promotes T-Tip with Cross Country Ride

By Ambassador Mark Brzezinski, U.S. Ambassador to Sweden Photos by Carl Hvenmark-Nilsson.

One of the things I like most about Sweden is visiting the towns and villages that dot the countryside. Many of these places were the hometowns of the ancestors of the estimated nine million Americans who can claim at least some Swedish ancestry. Just as the promise of new opportunity brought the people of Sweden and the United States closer together in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, today the promise of deepening ties through the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) can make the connection between our countries, our people and our businesses stronger than ever.

This summer, a team of Embassy Stockholm staff, including two colleagues from the public affairs section, our Marine Security Guard Detachment commander and I biked from Sweden's west coast to its east coast. We called our adventure T-TRIP. Our goal was to visit the towns and villages, and talk with the people and companies that will benefit from increased trade and investment between the United States and Sweden. We went outside the walls of the embassy and the city limits of Stockholm to hear firsthand from people about their hopes and concerns regarding T-TIP.

We started our journey on the water's edge at the port of Gothenburg, which for centuries has been the starting point for many journeys to the United States. Gothenburg was the point of departure for more than one million Swedes who emigrated to the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, the port is a focal point for U.S.-Swedish maritime trade. We were honored to have Gothenburg Mayor Anneli Hulthén give us a tour of the port and ride alongside our T-TRIP team as we started the journey.

Our first stop was Alingsås, where we met with local business leaders and young entrepreneurs to discuss how T-TIP could help create and expand innovative start-ups on both sides of the Atlantic. Up next was Falköping, where we toured a dairy farm and met with local farmers. We talked about how T-TIP could expand trade in agricultural products and ultimately mean more choices for consumers. Still dressed in our biking clothes, the T-TRIP team toured Falbygdens Energi, Sweden's first energy storage plant facility for low-voltage networks. Representatives from the company pointed out that T-TIP would make it easier for the two countries to share clean energy technologies and renewable fuel solutions.

Knowing that our future lies in the hands of the next generation, we pedaled on to the University of Skövde, the largest education center for gaming and computer science in Sweden. We met with students, faculty and municipality

representatives for a conversation on what T-TIP would mean for the future of innovative and creative technologies.

I have to admit, three days and a couple hundred miles into the journey, fatigue started to set in. We met with some heavy rains, but soldiered on. While our primary focus was the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, some of our meetings highlighted other aspects of the extensive U.S.-Sweden relationship. We stopped at a military school to meet Swedish soldiers who served in Afghanistan, Kosovo and elsewhere, and Stjärnhov, to have a fika (a Swedish-style coffee break) with former Prime Minister Göran Persson. We had a great discussion about foreign policy, T-TIP and sustainable energy.

One of the last stops on this week-long journey was Södertälje, one of Sweden's largest communities of refugees, many of whom came from Syria and Iraq. This small city of about 80,000 people has taken in more Iraqi refugees than United States and Canada combined. In a conversation with refugees and community leaders, the T-Trip team learned about programs in the city to promote integration and tolerance. I told them about the U.S. Embassy's ongoing commitment to promote diversity and integration.

We then spent the afternoon at the Scania, one of the world's largest producers of industrial vehicles. We learned how duties and regulatory hurdles have hampered Scania's U.S. business and discouraged investment in the United States, which creates jobs. As a special treat, we traded our bicycles for buses and test drove some Scania buses and semi-trailer trucks around Scania's test track.

After one week of biking 400 miles across the Swedish countryside, the T-Trip team arrived back home in Stockholm. Our journey ended at the Carnegie Brewery, a joint venture between Carlsberg Brewery and the New York-based Brooklyn Brewery. (Stockholm is Brooklyn Brewery's largest market outside of New York.) We were greeted by Swedish Trade Minister Ewa Björling and friends from the American Chamber of Commerce, the American Club and of course the embassy community.

Our T-Trip has been one of the highlights of my tenure in Sweden. We got to meet hundreds of people in towns across the country and hear from them firsthand how we can work together to make the relationship between the United States and Sweden even stronger. ■





Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from Embassy Lomé inspect progress of the Gblainvie School project in April.

Photo by Jennifer Aldridge

BIG CHANGES, SMALL PLACE

DOS, DOD partner on development aid to Togo

By Mich Coker, economic officer, and Lukas Jackson, development projects special assistant, U.S. Embassy in Lomé, and Jennifer Aldridge, Army Corps of Engineers Public Affairs

To help advance President Barack Obama's call to promote opportunity and development in sub-Saharan Africa, the U.S. Embassy in Lomé is partnering with Togolese communities on a range of cooperative efforts that seek to capitalize on the relatively limited U.S. government funds allocated to Togo.

A small nation on the West African coast, Togo lacks the physical presence of USAID or any other U.S. agency besides the State Department and Peace Corps. Nevertheless, Embassy Lomé has implemented a diversity of U.S.-funded development programs there. In visibility and impact, no effort has been more significant in recent years than the embassy's partnership with the Department of Defense (DOD) Humanitarian Assistance Program (HAP).

In Togo, HAP involves a relationship between the DOD's U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Embassy Lomé. They collaborate to propose, design and implement construction projects, ranging from schools to clinics to

waste transfer stations. HAP is one of the U.S. government's most conspicuous forms of diplomacy and outreach in Togo, and its highly visible projects provide significant, long-term impact.

Despite its size, Togo recently received around 10 percent of HAP's total budget allocation for sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting the need and the quality of projects proposed by Togolese communities. In recent years, most HAP funding for Togo has gone toward promoting public health, sanitation and education. The seven active construction

sites spread across Togo's five regions demonstrate the program's broad reach.

Several involve school construction. "Education plays a very important role in the development and stability of nations," said Ambassador Robert Whitehead at the opening of a HAP-funded primary school three hours northeast of Lomé. He noted that schools are where children develop curiosity and "look beyond their borders and are exposed to other experiences and languages."

The community greeted the ambassador with traditional Togolese revelry. Hundreds of villagers sang and danced at the unveiling of the new schoolhouse, which includes several classrooms, offices and latrines.

As elsewhere in Togo, the schoolhouse resulted from a grassroots effort to identify a community need and submit a competitive proposal for U.S. funding. Because HAP projects are driven by community demand, they have a sterling track record in meeting needs. Tado Development Committee representative Kokou Dzenkpovi said the new school has changed lives. "Before the school was built, parents had to walk into the bush to look for grass that could serve as roofing material for the school huts," he noted. "Now we are very happy about our solid, secure building."

Dzenkpovi said attendance increased, as has students' interest in learning. The Embassy Development Team confirmed this during a recent visit, noting higher attendance, reduced truancy and

increased confidence among local children.

Throughout Togo, HAP is funding \$1.8 million in construction and



renovation. The facilities are designed to use local resources for long-term sustainment in regions where humanitarian needs may pose major challenges to stability, prosperity and respect for human values. When possible, the program uses local subcontractors and laborers for construction, providing economic opportunity in communities where new construction projects are often few and far between.

As work progresses on a secondary school in Atomé, village chief Fagnidé Djagnikpo said he looks forward to having a safe place for children to attend classes without having to worry about the local rainy season. "In the new school, rainwater won't destroy the students' books. Their writing on the chalkboard won't get wet and disappear," Djagnikpo said.

To improve access and reduce disease, HAP is also building healthcare facilities, such as the Agbavé Health Clinic, which will serve 800 people in seven surrounding villages. Upon completion, it will have a reception area, labor and delivery rooms, pharmacy, recovery room, covered bathing area and garden, plus a rainwater-collection system and latrine building.

A midwife, who works out of a teacher's house in Agbavé and lacks access to medical equipment or a healthcare facility, said, "Most of the time, expectant mothers don't make it [to see a healthcare provider for prenatal care]. With the new clinic, more people will be saved."

Farther north, at Dapaong Regional Hospital, a pathology lab is being expanded to offer a waiting area, reception desk, lab room, doctor's office, storage area and latrines. In the current facility, blood is drawn, vaccines are administered and results are shared with patients in one congested area, said Dr. Agbenoko Kodjo, the laboratory chief. "We will be able to see up to 70 people a day in the new lab," he said. "It will be easy to serve the community."

A clinic and transfer station were recently completed in Lomé as part of the HAP program. The clinic serves a populous area, while the transfer station reduces the risk of spreading infectious disease. Vehicles dump trash into large bins, from which trucks take the trash to landfills outside the capital.

Beyond Togo's current slate of HAP projects, "USACE continues to be available to contribute our engineering expertise in support of development, diplomacy and defense goals in Togo and the whole of Africa," said Program Manager Kornell Rancy.

HAP projects are meeting their objective of dramatically and sustainably improving humanitarian conditions. In many cases, they deliver health and educational resources that have been absent or lacking for decades.

The good cheer that accompanies inauguration of a new project is often palpable. The sometimes shy Togolese villagers freely express their gratitude. Welcoming construction of a new primary school, village chief Togbui Yegbé Kokou Kini said, "Only God can learn the joy I have in my heart. We were waiting a long time for this project." ■



Fagnidé Djagnikpo, the Atomé chief, makes a point to embassy representatives during their visit in April.

Photo by Jennifer Aldridge



Local women cheer as officials arrive for the Lankouvi Garbage Depot's inauguration.

Photo by Essowe Benjamin Simyeli



Photo by Jennifer Aldridge



Startup Weekend

Embassy Ottawa event inspires business creation

By Kyle Johnson, senior public affairs advisor, U.S. Embassy in Ottawa

What does a “smart” doormat that could send messages to its owner have in common with an online tea store or a disposable device that could determine if an athlete is at risk of injury? They were all business ideas that were pitched by 60 young entrepreneurs during the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa’s Startup Weekend, June 13–15.

The aspiring entrepreneurs from across Canada were paired with seasoned business mentors to collaborate, learn and share ideas and skills. The competition’s aim: Create a winning startup business proposal.

After an evening of motivational speeches and a flurry of ideas, participants formed teams and set to work. For 54 hours over three days, they conducted market research, coded and designed websites, built prototypes and refined their pitches, which were judged at

the Sunday evening finale where the teams showcased their work.

Startup Weekends, a program of the U.S. non-profit Up Global, responds to President Obama’s 2011 call for increased federal support for entrepreneurialism. Up Global, which evolved from the White House Startup America initiative to boost entrepreneurialism, got a boost when it partnered with the State Department in January. Secretary of State John Kerry called for the Department to offer Startup Weekends in 1,000 cities around the world.

For the Ottawa event, Up Global provided expertise and a facilitator, while the post’s American Corner partner, the Ottawa Public Library, offered a spacious workspace and Google Canada provided all participant meals.

The 60 participants were chosen from a field of 200 applicants by a committee

of embassy economic officers, local entrepreneurs and partners.

The Startup Weekend arose from discussions at the American Corner, a “makerspace” that has tools to make product prototypes, including 3D printers, laser cutters and digital media. Makerspaces are catalysts for innovation and entrepreneurialism, which are tightly interconnected in the American and Canadian economies. The two countries have the world’s largest trade relationship—about \$2 billion each day.

“Startups are engines of job creation,” said Ambassador Bruce Heyman in welcoming remarks at the Startup Weekend. “Entrepreneurs intent on growing their businesses create the lion’s share of new jobs in every part of the United States and Canada and in every industry. It is entrepreneurs who will build the new industries of the 21st century and

Clockwise from left, public affairs section staff show their support for Startup Weekend; Startup Weekend participants pose for a group photo; attendees listen to Ambassador Heyman's welcoming remarks; Team Shout celebrates its first-place win.

Department of State photos

solve some of our toughest global challenges.”

Although attendees were almost all strangers, with not much more than a startup idea, they found the weekend to be a winning formula for sharing passions, building new communities of entrepreneurs and learning business startup skills, all while having fun.

Participant Cassidy Roberts praised participants’ “cool backgrounds and experiences” and said “getting to know them was the best part.” The connections she made are helping her with the business she’s building.

“I know the embassy was looking to foster entrepreneurship, and they did that with this event, not just with the business from the weekend but from the outstanding delegates that they brought to attend,” she said.

Another participant, Jean Phillip Mallette, lauded participants for their camaraderie and support, while participant Brad LeBlanc was glad to be part of “an energetic and diverse group.” He said the embassy team “was amazing ... To be able to plan, manage and execute an event at this scale is nothing short of incredible.”

Startup Weekend’s winner was Team Shout. The judges were won over by the team’s prototype mobile application, which let users report a customer service problem to a company that would then have a fixed amount of time to resolve the issue before the app would broadcast the problem and lack of response across multiple social media platforms. Besides bragging rights, the team got a prize of \$3,000 in legal services from Dentons Canada LLP, to help with its startup costs.

Startup Weekend generated excellent coverage in traditional and social media. An embassy-created Facebook page provides a virtual platform for the group to continue to interact and for the post to engage them on future programs. This national network is an important aspect of supporting entrepreneurs in Canada, where large distances can isolate them from potential collaborators, mentors and funding sources.

By helping Canada’s budding entrepreneurs learn the basics of founding and launching business ventures, Embassy Ottawa’s first Startup Weekend will help create a strong, binational network of future entrepreneurs and innovators, and drive economic development on both sides of the border. ■



Nigerian 'Dawn'



TV show aims to reduce election violence in Niger Delta

By Ben Beach, communications advisor, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

Violence is pervasive on American television, but in Nigeria, the State Department is using a reality TV show to discourage conflict by popularizing problem solving without violence.

"Most conflicts have deep roots, and all the easy solutions have been tried, so we are always looking for innovative approaches," said Will Meeker, who directs the four Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) staff members sent to Lagos to work with the U.S. Consulate General there. The centerpiece of the Mission-CSO effort is "Dawn in the Creeks," a TV show that debuted this summer and showcases the power of achieving social change through non-violent means. As one of many U.S. government efforts throughout the country, this engagement seeks to reduce the likelihood of destabilizing violence in the Niger Delta during the 2015 election period.

"I'm not naïve, but what I've seen here the last couple of years gives me hope," said Consul General Jeffrey Hawkins. "I believe that the Nigerian people are determined to live up to their potential and to be leaders of their continent. They are entrepreneurial, they are energetic, they are creative. 'Dawn in the Creeks' taps into this dynamic."

Much of the recent news about Africa's most populous nation has involved the

extremist group Boko Haram and its attacks in the Northeast. But the Niger Delta, the heart of the country's oil industry, is another area where violence has too often been a part of daily life. Very little of the billions of dollars in oil revenue reaches Niger Delta residents, breeding frustration and anger and providing kindling for explosive violence. The region's crime rate has increased by 50 percent since 2009, and a survey funded by CSO determined that 30 percent of citizens in three Niger Delta states believe that violence pays. That works out to four million people.

To develop the concept of this project and bring it to life, CSO established the Niger Delta Legacy Board of Advisors. Its members are 16 Nigerian thought leaders from the worlds of business, media, film, religion and civic advocacy. CSO wanted a plan that addressed the most important aspects of a conflict, involved local partners building on local initiatives and would pass all of its activities to its partners, ensuring sustainability.

For creative vision, the board turned to Jeta Amata, a celebrated film director who grew up in the Niger Delta and now is based in Los Angeles. After the board identified one community in each of the three states, Amata visited the communities to select seven people from each that he would train to make films. He sent them to a "Nollywood Academy" in Lagos—so named because Nigeria is Africa's filmmaking capital—where they learned

filmmaking basics. The 21 trainees then returned home to

produce real-life dramas about conflict, oil, reconciliation and peace, the content featured on "Dawn in the Creeks."

One community focused on how the illegal siphoning of oil from pipelines has led to conflict among friends and health problems that sometimes result in death. The film showed how these problems can be reduced through communication and education about the consequences of oil theft.

One of the young filmmakers, Regina Josiah, who is now a film production designer, thanked Amata and U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria James Entwistle "for everything you have done in our lives."

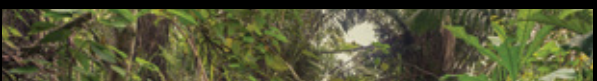
"Our film," she said, "is a good one that is telling people why we shouldn't go into violence because violence is not the best solution. We should make peace not only in our community, also in our own family. So this film you are about to watch is going to make a great change in this community and in the whole wide world."

So far, "Dawn in the Creeks" airs on five Nigerian TV networks that are not affiliated with the national government and two public TV stations. The Delta audience is huge, roughly 1.1 million, and the national audience is 2.5 million.

Father Edward Obi, chairman of the Niger Delta Legacy Board of Advisors, screened an episode to more than 400 students at the Young Catholic Students Conference, convened by the Fund for Peace in Port Harcourt. He then facilitated a discussion about the role of youth in peacebuilding and advocacy.

"Most conflicts have deep roots, and all the easy solutions have been tried, so we are always looking for innovative approaches."

-Will Meeker





The show encourages viewers to discuss issues online and on the talk radio stations broadcasting throughout the Delta. It has even gotten airtime on another popular TV show that highlights community efforts to work with the government to improve life for the average citizen.

"It's catching on," said board member Tomi Bolade, station manager of popular Port Harcourt-based Wazobia Radio FM. "We have regular callers into the weekly show and are running jingles on a regular basis [that are] driving people to their televisions."

Though the program is based in the Niger Delta, the board, Amata and others involved expect "Dawn in the Creeks" to resonate with northern Nigerians as well. "We hope to counter the prevailing North vs. South narrative by illustrating that struggles and solutions transcend regions," said Meeker.

Building on the media campaign's momentum, the board has identified ways to strengthen communities' ability to challenge the view that violence pays. The messages of "Dawn" are reinforced at the community level, through networks across the Niger Delta and through targeted engagement with a new generation of leaders. In addition, the team is piloting community interventions and partnerships with international and local civil society organizations.

"The idea is to build on initiatives that already exist rather than start something from scratch," explained Hawkins. "Interventions will focus on instilling leadership, communication, conflict resolution skills and providing direct opportunities for community



Jeta Amata speaks to youth in Ozoro about leadership and community concerns, to identify the seven youths to attend his filmmaking school.

Photos by Sodienye Kurubo, Stakeholder Democracy Network

members and rising leaders to engage their governments in a propositional manner."

The period prior to the February elections will pose significant challenges for Nigeria. With the right mix of local leaders driving and sustaining this unique initiative in the Niger Delta, U.S. Mission Nigeria, the Bureau

of African Affairs, CSO and other partners believe that the likelihood of violence can be reduced by channeling the tremendous energy of Nigerians in new ways.

More information on "Dawn in the Creeks" is on the show's website and its Facebook and Twitter feeds. ■



U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria James Entwistle, center, celebrates at the "Dawn in the Creeks" premier with filmmakers from the city of Erema.

Photo by Jane Maduegbuna, AfriNolly



Assistant Marine Security Guard Detachment Commander Sgt. Allan Lucas III distributes lunches in Benoni township outside of Johannesburg. Photo by Marine Corps Sgt. Jamine Mitchell

Post Makes 800 Bag Lunches for South African Children

The U.S. Consulate General in Johannesburg recently joined with a U.S. social media project called Hashtaglunchbag to help South Africa address hunger. On a Saturday in May, more than 100 post staff, family members, friends and Consulate Youth Council members prepared more than 800 lunches and delivered them to hungry kids in nearby townships.

An 18-car convoy of volunteers distributed lunches to three impoverished communities around Johannesburg where the consulate has PEPFAR Community Grants projects to address the impact of AIDS. One member of the consulate community said, "The sight of the children walking with us through the streets will be with me for a long time."

The director of the Neo e Bonolo Drop-in Center in one community expressed gratitude to the volunteers. "It just means so much to have your care and support," the director said. "Now, we just want to know when you're coming back to visit."

More information on Consulate General Johannesburg's involvement in the project is on the post's website.

Soccer Coaches Visit Haiti

Two American soccer coaches arrived at the U.S. Embassy in Port-Au-Prince Aug. 3 as part of a weeklong sports diplomacy program for youth sponsored by the INL and public affairs sections. The embassy partnered with the Haitian National Police (HNP), Community Policing Unit, Scouts d'Haiti and Haitian Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports.

The coaches were Tony Sanneh, who played professional soccer in the United States and Europe for 17 years and was part of the U.S. Men's National Team in the 2002 FIFA World Cup, and Thomas Rongen, who also played in the United States and Europe for many years and was head coach of three Major League soccer clubs: the New England Revolution, DC United and Chivas USA.

They worked with hundreds of youths from around the city on football skills, teambuilding, conflict resolution and shared responsibility. They also worked with Haitian coaches on long-term programs to be implemented to keep community-based soccer leagues going in Haiti.

In its sports diplomacy, the embassy collaborates with the HNP to reinforce community engagement and intervene with youths in at-risk urban areas, helping provide them opportunities to avoid violence outside of school.



From left, coaches Tony Sanneh and Thomas Rongen greet Haitian players in Port Au Prince.

Photo by Tod Herskovitz, The Sanneh Foundation

Ethics Answers

Q: I work with several contractors at post, and we often socialize at lunch or after hours. Yesterday, one of the contractors paid for my lunch at an expensive restaurant. My lunch cost \$45. I know I should reimburse this person, but also know there is a rule that permits me to accept a gift of \$20 or under. If I reimburse this person \$25 to reduce the value of the gift to \$20, will I be in compliance with the ethics rules?

A: No. You should reimburse the contractor for the full value of your lunch. You may accept a gift with a value of \$20 or under, provided you do not accept gifts worth more than \$50 from any one source in a calendar year. However, when the market value of a gift exceeds \$20, the rules do not permit you to simply pay the excess value over \$20. Because the market value of your lunch exceeded \$20, you need to pay for the whole lunch.

Ethics Answers presents hypothetical ethical scenarios Department employees might face. For help with real ethics questions, email ethicsattorneymailbox@state.gov.

Embassy, Vatican Host Anti-Trafficking Event

In July, the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See co-hosted with the Vatican a digital video conference on the Department's 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report. More than 40 people attended the event at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in Vatican City, including members of the diplomatic corps, Vatican officials, journalists, NGO workers and members of religious orders battling trafficking. Participants discussed the report and the political, social and economic dimensions of human trafficking, which Pope Francis has called a "crime against humanity" and Secretary of State John Kerry has called "modern-day slavery."

Speakers included U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See Ken Hackett and Bishop Sanchez Sorondo, chair of the Global Freedom Network, the Holy See's newly launched interfaith anti-trafficking initiative. U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons Luis CdeBaca spoke on the positive developments and setbacks in the anti-trafficking effort. He noted nations' policies on trafficking prevention, protection and prosecution; shared stories of former trafficking victims; and advised participants on how to strengthen international efforts to combat this crime.

The embassy's public affairs section and Global Freedom Network staff live-tweeted the event, which strengthened the U.S.-Holy See partnership on this issue and paved the way for future collaboration.



From left Global Freedom Network CEO Antonia Stampalija and Global Freedom Network Board Chair Bishop Sanchez Sorondo listen as Ambassador Hackett delivers opening remarks at the event.

Photo by Antoinette Hurtado

Employees' Donations Feed DC Families

This year's Feds Feed Families summer drive for donations garnered over 25,000 pounds of nonperishable food delivered to collection bins in Department buildings in the Washington, D.C., area.

A further 91,000 pounds of food was gained through gleaning, a new aspect of the drive not widely used before. Local farmers offered surplus crops such as collard greens and kale, and federal employees and other community groups picked and packaged them for donation to the Capital Area Food Bank. The combined total of over 115,000 pounds was a new Department record.

Among the events held to increase food donations and awareness of the drive were a Department of Agriculture-sponsored golf tournament, a Department of State Office of Employee Relations ice cream social and a Department of Energy Chili Challenge.

There were also interbureau challenges, such as that held between the bureaus of African Affairs and Human Resources. The Bureau of African Affairs contributed most to the summer drive with a whopping 7,529 pounds food donations, followed closely by Consular Affairs with 7,407 pounds.



Bob Horrigan of IRM represents the Department of State in the Chili Challenge, with his pot of excellent chili.

Photo by Carrie Duong

A 46-Year Legacy

After working at the U.S. Consulate General in Rio de Janeiro as a locally employed staff member for 46 years, Ana-Maria Chiarelli de Miranda retired in September. A Brazilian native, she spent part of her childhood in Flushing, N.Y., before her family returned to Brazil, where she earned a law degree. In 1968, she began work in the Human Resources office of what was then the U.S. Embassy in Rio.

Miranda was president of the first employee association and was named the FSN of the year in 2012 for Mission Brazil. She recalled life in the United States as "my first memories of life—of freedom, of ethics and citizenship."

On departing her position as an HR supervisor, Miranda said her work has been rewarding, but she's looking forward to taking it easy and spending time with her husband and pets, and to someday walk the Camino de Compostela, an 800-mile pilgrimage route from France to Spain.



Ana-Maria receives the Secretary's Career Achievement Award from Consul General John S. Creamer.

Photo by Carlos Kúlps



Consulate Lighted for Gay Pride Week

The U.S. Consulate General in Hamburg displays rainbow colors for Hamburg's Pride Week 2014
Photo by Heiko Herold

The U.S. Consulate General in Hamburg, Germany, supported Hamburg's Pride Week, July 25 to Aug. 3, by illuminating its building in the rainbow colors associated with the LGBT pride movement. Known as "The Little White House on the Alster" due to its architecture, the illuminated consulate became something of a tourist attraction during the week and received positive media attention.

In addition, Consul General Nancy Corbett hoisted the rainbow flag at the consulate and the public affairs section distributed more than 1,200 postcards featuring pictures of the illuminated consulate.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Adams, John Quincy
Adkins, Benny Keith
Aguilar, Karen
Allan, Thomas S.
Biron, Jeffrey L.
Brown, Jefferson T.
Brown, Michael K.
Crunkleton, Martha A.
Davidson, Douglas A.

Dowling, Thomas J.
Lamb, Charlene Rae
Langland, Allan D.
Lindquist, Troy A.
McManaway, Richard Paul
McMullen, Christopher Jay
Moffatt, Laurie Louise
Morningstar, Richard L.
Nutwell III, George M.
Pellet, Maura V.
Popchak, Robert J.
Schmierer, Richard J.

Scott, Jane S.
Steinhauser, Phillip C.
Taplin, Mark
Walsh, Thomas J.
Wijesooriya, Nilal Manilka
Wisell, William Randall

Civil Service

Adgerson, Elizabeth
Ashe, Irene D.
Bush Jr., William C.
Corbin, Lee
Driver, Helen L.

Garner, Sharon J.P.
Hall, Denise Vest
Hansen, Constance E.
King, Thomas M.
Merrill, John
Morse, Jane A.
O'Brien, Esperanza R.
Russell, Catherine Joyce
Sager, Christopher P.
Scott, Muriel L.
Tibbetts Macisso, Lynnda E.
Titus, Penny R.
Votaw, Claire-Louise

Correction: A photo of Step Challenge participants in September's In Brief misstated the order of those named. The order should have been: from left, Monica Sendor, Esther McCarty and Kaitlin Muench.

Pet Smarts

FSI class addresses travelers' concerns

By Maureen Johnston, resource specialist, FSI Transition Center/Overseas Briefing Center

Preparing pets for shipping to one's overseas posting can be a frustrating, complicated and expensive proposition, which is why FSI's Transition Center offers a popular Traveling with Pets program each April.

Problems transitioning personnel may face include stringent country entry requirements that necessitate months of preparation or restrictive airline pet-shipping policies that force the hiring of a professional pet shipper. They may have to devote precious time to determine if there are any acceptable alternate airline routes, face excessively long flights with layovers during the hottest summer months, or have to find someone to care for their pet as it remains in the U.S. until temperatures cool sufficiently for travel.

In recent years, many pet owners have also had to go through customs and recheck their pets at the transit point because some airlines no longer transfer pets from one airline's plane to another, even if they are code-share partners and will transfer luggage. Sometimes, prior to moving into permanent housing, pet owners may have to stay at a hotel that does not accept pets.

At this year's presentation on traveling with pets, these concerns were addressed, and attendees got answers to their questions. One speaker, Mette Beecroft from the Office of Transportation, explained how pet owners can determine whether they will be eligible for a partial reimbursement for the airline pet fee under the miscellaneous portion of the Foreign and Home Transfer Allowances. She also discussed the GSA exemption that pet owners may use if an airline refuses to ship a pet as accompanied baggage.

Veteran airline cargo executive Gregg Pittellkow gave an insider's view, using photos to show what happens to a pet once it is delivered to the airport prior to and during the flight.

"That's a part of the process we never see," one attendee remarked. Another said Pittellkow helped participants "understand why the airlines are so strict," and a third said, "He assuaged many of my concerns."

Professional pet shipper Bob Rollins suggested several questions to ask a potential shipper prior to engaging his or her services and highlighted soft- and hard-sided pet carriers and the safety features needed for crates in the cargo hold. One attendee said it was a good idea to have a pet shipper ready, as a backup, and to be sure one's pet is "kennel-ready."

Veterinarian Kate Bowers, of the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, gave an overview of the service's guidelines for pet owners, who often use them to meet destination country certification requirements. One attendee said this "put a face to the USDA process."

Private practice veterinarian Rebecca Bolch gave tips on preparing a pet for the trip and what temporary symptoms a pet may experience after the trip. Friendship Animal Hospital, where Dr. Bolch practices, has a pet travel technician.

Summing up the program, one attendee said, "A good deal of my anxiety on this subject is gone," and another called it "a great introduction for overseas pet travel, especially for those who have never experienced it before."

Streaming video of the 2014 Traveling with Pets program is on BNet, and other online pet shipping resources are available on OBC's newly redesigned OpenNet site. These resources include post-specific pet entry requirements and restrictions, airline



policies and other critical aspects of pet shipping. OBC's 2014 pet survey from post GSOs provides information for pet owners preparing for travel to those posts. ■

Top: A dog named Randy prepares for the trip to his owner's next posting in Kyiv.

Photo by Suzanne Turner

Bottom: A pet owner completes a travel form for his pet, as airlines require.

Photo by Gregg Pittellkow



Appointments

Larry Edward André Jr.
U.S. Ambassador
to Mauritania



Pamela K. Hamamoto
U.S. Representative to the Office
of the United Nations and Other
International Organizations



Eunice S. Reddick
U.S. Ambassador
to Niger



James D. Nealon
U.S. Ambassador
to Honduras



Michael Stephen Hoza
U.S. Ambassador
to Cameroon



Larry Edward André Jr. (SFS) of Texas is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. He previously served as director of the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Other assignments include deputy chief of mission in Tanzania and Sierra Leone, and tours in Kenya, Ethiopia, Guinea, Bangladesh, Cameroon and Nigeria. He also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal and USAID contractor in Chad.

Pamela K. Hamamoto of Hawaii is the new U.S. Representative to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador. For the past 15 years, she has been a trustee and advisor to educational institutions in northern California. A civil engineer, she began her career in the energy and telecommunications industries, and later became an investment banker.

Michael Stephen Hoza (SFS) of Washington is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. Previously, he was the management counselor in Moscow, and before that management counselor and acting deputy chief of mission in Nairobi. Other postings include Madrid, Paris, Kathmandu, Mbabane (chargé d'affaires), Asmara, Maputo, Martinique and Abidjan.

Thomas P. Kelly III (SFS) of California is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Djibouti. Previously, he was principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. Before that, he was principal officer and consul general in São Paulo. He was deputy chief of mission in Vilnius and Buenos Aires, and also served in San Salvador, Santiago, Paris and Quito.

James D. Nealon (SFS) of New Hampshire is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras. Previously, he was civilian deputy to the Commander of U.S. Southern Command. Before that, he was deputy chief of mission in Ottawa, deputy chief of mission in Lima and chargé d'affaires and deputy chief of mission in Montevideo. Other postings include Madrid, Budapest, Manila and Santiago.

Crystal Nix-Hines of California is the new U.S. permanent representative to the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, she was a New York Times reporter, practiced law and, in the 1990s, held three positions with the Department: counselor to the assistant secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; member of the Policy Planning Staff; and special assistant to the Legal Adviser.



Crystal Nix-Hines

U.S. permanent representative to the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



Andrew H. Schapiro

U.S. Ambassador to Czech Republic



Robert A. Wood

U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva



Thomas P. Kelly III

U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti



John F. Tefft

U.S. Ambassador to Russia



Eunice S. Reddick (SFS) of the District of Columbia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Niger. Previously, she was ambassador to Gabon and Sao Tome and Príncipe. Other postings include Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, China and Taiwan. In Washington, she has covered African refugee assistance; South-east Asian, East African and West African affairs; and U.N. and international development agencies.

Andrew H. Schapiro of Illinois is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic. Previously, he was a partner at the international law firm Quinn Emanuel Urquhart and Sullivan, and before that a partner at Mayer Brown. He also served as a trial attorney for the Federal Public Defender's Office in Manhattan and law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun. He is the son of a Czech refugee.

John F. Tefft (SFS) of Virginia is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation. Previously, he was executive director of RAND Corporation's Business Leaders Forum. He has been ambassador to Lithuania, Georgia and Ukraine and deputy assistant secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs. Other postings include Moscow (deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires), Jerusalem, Budapest and Rome.

Robert A. Wood (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was deputy chief of mission to the U.S. Mission to the EU, deputy U.S. permanent representative to the International Organizations in Vienna and acting assistant secretary and deputy assistant secretary for Public Affairs. Other postings include Berlin, Mexico City, Lagos, Islamabad and Pretoria.



Check out our online magazine to watch a video message from featured ambassadors.

Obituaries



Harold J. Ashby Jr., 66, partner of retired Foreign Service officer Edward McKeon, died July 29 of a pulmonary embolism in Chevy Chase, Md. He accompanied McKeon to postings in Tokyo, Osaka, Guangzhou, Tel Aviv and Mexico City. Overseas, he taught English, and in Mexico City was an administrative officer for USAID. In Washington, he was an administrator at Howard University. He loved travel, gardening and his adopted sons.



David C. Brooks, 56, a Foreign Service officer with USIA and the Department, died April 2 in Arlington, Va. He joined the Foreign Service in 1993 and served in Luanda, São Paulo, Lima, Managua, Caracas and Warsaw. At the time of his death, he was chief of the Policy Unit in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. He was known for being able to disarm anti-American audiences with engaging talks on U.S. culture, especially comic books.



Rudolph Fascell, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 12 in Homosassa Springs, Fla. He served in the military during World War II. His postings included Lima, Guatemala City, San José, Panama City and Santo Domingo. He retired in 1988. He was a "Mr. Gadget" who always had the latest technology, and loved family, reading, entertaining, gardening and exercise.



Douglas L. Langan, 70, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 25 of lung cancer at his home in Wilmington, N.C. He served in Bolivia with the Peace Corps and joined the Department in 1971. He was posted to Istanbul, Havana, La Paz and Lima, and served as deputy assistant secretary in four bureaus. After retiring in 1997, he consulted with the Department and organized the new Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator. He lived near a beautiful beach, where he indulged his passions for fishing, running, reading and TV sports.



Harriet L. Maffei, 86, a retired Foreign Service employee, died July 30 in her Gloucester, Mass., home. She joined the Foreign Service in 1964 and was posted to Benghazi, Libya, and Paris. She met her husband, Victor Maffei, in Benghazi and accompanied him to posts in Europe, Africa, Saudi Arabia and Australia, where she continued her career as a Foreign Service secretary and management assistant. In retirement, she volunteered as an ESL teacher and archival researcher.



Christine Murray, 66, a retired Civil Service employee, died Aug. 8. She was a program officer in the Public Liaison Office of the Bureau of Public Affairs, where she mentored many employees. She organized outreach events, conferences and town meetings at the Department and across the country. After retiring in 2002 with 33 years of service, she devoted herself to her family and a non-profit organization that provided assistance to senior citizens.



Betty Carol Taylor, 73, a retired Foreign Service secretary, died July 11 in Tallahassee, Fla. She served in Hong Kong, Beirut, Amman, Tunis, Bonn, Prague, Cyprus, New Delhi, Kathmandu and Brasília during her 30-year career. She loved traveling and cooking, and was known at all her posts for remembering everyone's birthday with a homemade cake. After her Beirut posting, she was named Foreign Service Secretary of the Year.



John C. "Thommo" Thomson, 78, a retired Foreign Service National, died April 26 of cancer in Canberra, Australia. He worked in the embassy's Financial Management Center for 31 years, and was one of the Department's first FSN certifying officers. His regional responsibilities included several South Pacific posts, in addition to those in Australia. He retired in 2000. He loved golf and fine wine, and was renowned for his storytelling and sense of humor. He was active in his church and charitable organizations in Canberra.

Questions concerning employee deaths should be directed to the Office of Casualty Assistance at (202) 736-4302. Inquiries concerning deaths of retired employees should be directed to the Office of Retirement at (202) 261-8960. For specific questions on submitting an obituary, please contact us at statemagazine@state.gov or (202) 663-1688.

Lying in State

A FIELD GUIDE TO EMBASSY SPAMISTAN

ECONOMIC OFFICER DESDEMONA DEMINT
IN FULL PLUMAGE OF TRADITIONAL LOCAL GARB



RAISING MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS...



ASSISTANT CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER
KYLE FENDER DISPLAYS PLUMAGE AND
BEHAVIOR AIMED AT ATTRACTING A MATE



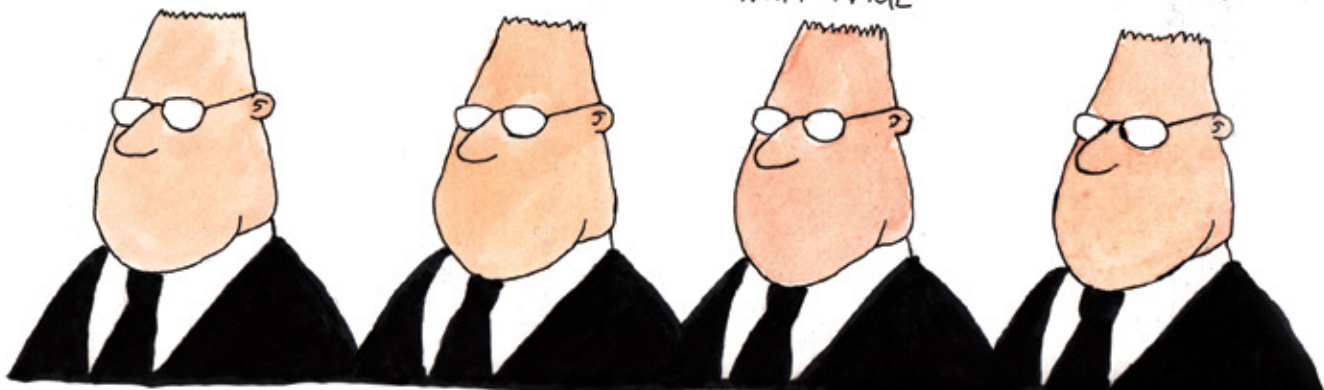
THE MANY MOODS OF AMBASSADOR BIXBY BOOMFIG...

SATISFIED

DISAPPOINTED

SEETHING
WITH RAGE

EBULLIENT



AMUEER 2014



Iraq



Canada

End State

Iraq Pg. 10

An Iraqi girl peeks out of a broken classroom window in Nawafal, Iraq, where soldiers delivered new desks to her school.



Photo by Air Force SSgt. Samuel Bendet

Canada Pg. 24

The emerald waters of Rawson Lake reflect Mount Sarrail's sheer cliffs in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, Kananaskis Country, Alberta.



Photo by daveblogs007

Sweden Pg. 20

A colorful sunset over Stockholm harbor silhouettes Stadshuset (City Hall) which annually plays host to the Nobel Prize banquet.



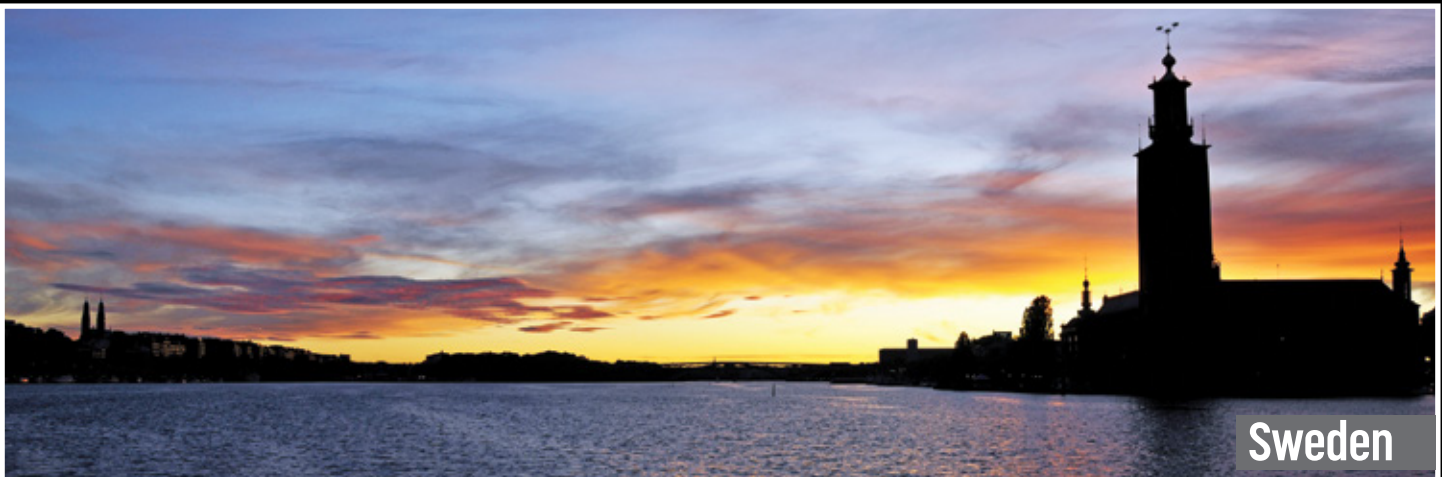
Photo illustration by Dennis Jarvis

Brazil Pg. 3

A Brazilian football fan dons an elaborate costume and makeup to show support for the country's national team during the World Cup.



Photo by Ricky Montalvo



Sweden



Brazil



U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Human Resources
Washington, DC 20520

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